

BLIND MAN'S LUCK

By P. G. Eccles

"Please help the blind" was the inscription on Harry Larkin's placard, which he wore around his neck as he sat day after day at the foot of the elevated stairs. Sometimes a charitable woman, or a man who was feeling friendly toward the world stopped and deposited a coin, looking sympathetically at the old man seated with crossed legs and bowed body, his sightless eyes peering into vacancy.

To Harry Larkin every footstep conveyed its significance. He could tell the woman shopper from the shopgirl, the man of business from the "rounder." He knew a good part of his patrons, for generally the same people remembered the blind man. Especially in the theater hour did he come to recognize the footsteps and the voices of those who went by his post.

There was the girl's voice, for instance. It was a merry, laughing voice, and her steps were like a fairy's. The first time she hesitated in front of him Larkin heard a masculine voice exclaim impatiently:

"Don't waste your money on those fakers, Elaine!"

But Larkin only thanked the young girl, for a beggar is schooled to insults. He heard the footsteps of the girl and the man recede up the stairs.

Then, perhaps a year afterward, he suddenly fished Elaine and her father out of the caverns of his memory. For footsteps halted near him and the same merry voice exclaimed:

"Wait a minute, Jack! Look at this poor blind man."

"Hurry, then, or we'll be late for the show," answered another voice, a young man's voice.

The next morning, during the shopping hour, the young girl halted in front of Larkin and the laughing

voice said, with just a catch of tears in it:

"You brought me luck last night, blind man. I can't tell you how happy I am, but I am going to give you this. It is a one-dollar bill."

"Thank you, miss. I know the value," answered Larkin.

"How do you know it isn't a five?" asked the young girl.

"Nobody ever gives a five to a blind man, miss," said Larkin.

The young girl went off, laughing merrily, and after that Larkin would



"You Brought Me Luck."

hear, once in a while, the same merry voice, and a coin would be dropped into his hat. He came to listen for it, and when he did not hear it for weeks together the blind man would feel disappointed.

Once in a while the blind man heard the footsteps of the young man who had been with the girl. He knew them as the blind man knows steps, by their individuality. There was the least longer interval than the normal between the stroke of the heel and the click of the sole. Lar-